

## Building a Community that Stands - a study in the Book of Acts - Jill Weber

- A suggestion: Begin your time together thanking God that Emmaus Rd grew out of, and is part of, the 24-7 Prayer network, which is now in 100+ countries with 20 national offices and has existed for 25 years.

### Acts 4v23-32 Praying Boldly

Peter and John had been condemned for preaching Jesus (4v1-22). On their release they “*returned to their own people.*” (v23).

#### Q1. Who is your crew?

Pete Greig challenged Jill to start an 8am prayer meeting. But it seemed inconceivable until the pandemic freed everyone to be available! Now meets daily as “Upper Zoom” (Also 9pm). When one has low motivation, others are “on fire” and bring encouragement. This is “the crew” for some, and it’s open to all.

Matt 18v20 promises that Jesus is with the small group.

When we grow in God, another part of our life can “take a hit” so find others to pray with regularly. Find time to do it! Pray with boldness. Woking ER has a “Prayer for Prodigal Kids” - many joined.

Accountability can bring motivation. After persecution, Peter and John went to meet their crew.

- Discuss the idea of “prayer crews.” How do we begin? Who can we ask? Can we commit to each other?
- How might “Prayer Triplets” work in our situation?
- How can we encourage prayer within our Collective?

#### Q2. What is your story?

When the crew heard the testimony of Peter and John they prayed, situating themselves in the story of God. Quoting Ps 2 they reminded themselves of God’s plans and their part in them: v20 *Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness.*

Know who you are and whose you are. Do you have a sense of being part of God’s overarching plan?

The 100-year 24-7prayer meeting arising out of the community at Herrnhut in 1720’s became an incubator for gospel champions. Likewise, we are raised up to be filled up with the Spirit and sent out as living letters. Hab 2v14 *For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.*

- How do we “situate ourselves” within Bible principles?
- What Bible verses spring to mind?
- How can we incubate our enthusiasm for mission? (Our workplace, school, college, etc can be places for evangelism).

#### Q3. Where is your focus?

The disciples didn’t “circle their wagons” in defence they went on the offensive.. *consider their threats ... speak boldly.* Before the crucifixion the disciples ran and hid. Now, filled with the Spirit they went forward regardless of consequences. You can magnify your problems or you can magnify the Lord. Which do you want to be bigger? Fear = False Evidence Appearing Real. God is sovereign over all.

You can talk to the problem about God or you can talk to God about the problem. Involve God. Declare that he is greater than the problem. He wants to make all things new (Rev 21v5). He is loving, generous and merciful (Lk 11v13) and we can approach him in confidence (Heb 4v15-16).

- What fears do we have?
- How can we refocus on God when problems seem so large?
- How can we grow in confidence in God?

#### Further ideas for your Collective:

- Try praying together using Bible verses as a basis of “magnifying the Lord” (ie Ps 100, 102v1-7, 103v1-6)
- Encourage the use of Lectio 365, either individually or as a family
- Try talking to a problem about God together in your collective (you’ll have to all agree on a problem first!)